Religious Education - RE

Here, at Christ Church CE Primary School, the main aim of Religious Education is to help children to acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity as a living faith that influences the lives of people worldwide and as the religion that has most shaped British culture and heritage. We also aim to enable children to know and understand about other major world religions and world views, their impact on society, culture and the wider world; to enable pupils to express ideas and insights and to appreciate the way that religious beliefs shape life and our behaviour; to develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues and enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Intent

Religious Education is taught throughout the school in such a way as to reflect the overall aims, values, and philosophy of the school, especially the motto of 'Together We Can – Through Christ Who Strengthens Us'. At Christ Church CE Primary School, Religious Education plays an important role, along with all other curriculum areas, particularly PSHE, in promoting the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of our children. Pupils are provided with an RE Knowledge Organiser, which is also shared with parents at the beginning of each topic, to specify the knowledge, skills and vocabulary to be acquired and an overview of content.

Implementation

At Christ Church CE Primary School, it has been agreed that, in line with Liverpool Diocesan guidelines, the Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education syllabus, 'Questful RE' should be followed, also incorporating the new Sefton Syllabus. This combines academic rigour with the development of the character and spirit of the child. It provides opportunities for spiritual development and personal reflection through a journey of faith. The units are chosen and structured to show progression in knowledge, skills, vocabulary as well as attitudes towards religion. The 'Questful RE' syllabus includes the important elements of the 'Understanding Christianity' concepts:

- Making sense of the text: developing pupils' skills of reading and interpretation; understanding how Christians interpret, handle and use biblical texts; making sense of the meanings of texts for Christians.
- Understanding the impact: examining ways in which Christians respond to biblical texts and teachings, and how they put their beliefs into action in diverse ways within the Christian community and in the world.
- Making connections: evaluating, reflecting on and connecting the texts and concepts studied, and discerning possible connections between these and pupils' own lives and ways of understanding the world.

The 'Questful RE' resources also provide structured teaching on other major world religions, which is enhanced through the use of artefacts, visitors and visits which enable pupils to explore faiths other than Christianity.

Christ Church CE Primary School also implements the Diocesan Board of Education recommendations: -

a) That the amount of time allocated to RE should be at least 5%, included on the school timetable weekly. This is the minimum recommended in national guidelines. There will be occasions when RE takes a larger slice of the curriculum, reflecting Christ Church CE Primary School's greater commitment to the subject.

b) That out of the curriculum time for RE, Christianity should occupy a maximum of **80%**. Therefore, **20%** of RE Curriculum time will be devoted to non-Christian faiths, predominantly Islam and Judaism.

There are no presumptions made as to the religious backgrounds and beliefs and values of the children and the staff. We value the religious background of all members of the school community and hope that this will encourage individuals to share their own experiences with others freely. All religions and their communities are treated with respect and sensitivity and we value the links, which are, and can be made between home, school, and a faith community. We acknowledge that each religion studied can contribute to the education of all our pupils. We promote teaching in Religious Education that stresses open enquiry and first-hand experiences wherever possible for both staff and children. Our Religious Education Ambassadors give pupils the opportunity to work with our Values Council and RE Subject Leader to continually develop our RE Curriculum and school values.

Topics are taught progressively, with children moving from understanding and retelling religious stories, to analysing and evaluating similarities and differences within and between religions. They are increasingly encouraged to investigate and interpret religious texts, artefacts and practices and to express their understanding in a variety of ways, including role play and art as well as written responses. In KS1, children are presented with stories about Jesus and encouraged to understand why the Bible is regarded as a special book. In lower KS2, children are introduced to stories from the Old Testament as well as a deeper understanding of who Jesus is. In upper KS2, children develop their understanding of religious beliefs and practices in response to the Old and New Testaments and other religious texts.

Specific learning about other faiths begins in year 2, with topics about the Mosque and the Qur'an. Judaism is introduced in year 3, with topics about Hannukah and Jewish prayer. More teaching about the Five Pillars of Islam is included in the year 4 syllabus and then understanding of both Judaism and Islam is developed in years 5 and 6. Appreciation of other religions is further developed through visitors and visits to religious buildings, for example Toxteth Mosque, Childwall Synagogue and whole school presentations by Muslim Learner Services.

Children are also encouraged to journey through the ecclesiastical year, marking significant events and festivals through experiences such as the 'Easter Experience', Nativity plays and Harvest festival, as well as through their RE lessons. There are strong links with the local Church, with clergy leading school collective worship each week, as well as children regularly attending services in Church. Children are also able to visit and explore the Church during their RE topics, such as 'Baptism' and 'Eucharist' and Church members come into school to answer pupils' questions during topics such as, 'Why do Christians read the Bible?'. Christ Church CE Primary School has been awarded 2 Church School Partnership Awards for our links with the local Church and community and clergy continue to prepare children for Confirmation and Reception of Communion before Confirmation.

Children also learn from celebrations of other festivals, such as Diwali, Chinese New Year and Hannukah. Pupil voice has shown that children appreciate the range of learning experiences that are available to them in RE in the school. This has been enhanced through the introduction of 'Together We Can Fridays', where children are able to explore our school values in greater depth in a mixed age setting. Years 5 and 6 are also encouraged to develop their leadership skills through these activities and by completing the Archbishop of York Youth Trust Young Leaders' Award.

Impact

The children at Christ Church CE Primary School enjoy learning about Christianity and other religions and why people choose, or choose not, to follow a religion. 'Questful RE' develops children's knowledge and understanding of the nature of religion and belief, it provokes challenging questions about meaning and purpose, truth and values, identity and belonging. It prepares children for citizenship in today's diverse society and enables them to develop sensitivity to, and respect for, others. Quality RE breaks down barriers and builds communities and offers pupils authentic encounters with living faith communities, equipping them with the ability to hold an informed conversation about religious beliefs and practices. Through their RE learning, the children are able to make links between their own lives and those of others in their community and in the wider world. RE acts as a hub, therefore, between social aspects of learning, science, history and geography. Through RE, our children are developing an understanding of their own and other people's cultures and ways of life, which they are then able to communicate to the wider community. RE offers our children the means by which to understand how other people choose to live and to understand why they choose to live in that way. They are given opportunities to reflect on their own values and beliefs as well as those of others. These beliefs, values and religious narratives are reinforced through daily acts of collective worship, carried out within classes, phases, key stages and sometimes whole school assemblies.